

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

A Publication of the Department of Community Resources and Services

Volume 11, No. 4 • April 2021

HoCo Volunteers Rock!

National Volunteer Week is April 18 – 24, a time to shine a light on those individuals who generously donate their time and talents to address community needs throughout Howard County. During the crisis created by the pandemic, volunteers have been essential in helping communities heal physically and economically.

Coronavirus restrictions and stay at home orders may have changed the ways Howard County volunteers are helping others, but it has not diminished their spirit of giving. Whether donating online to support local food and clothing drives, delivering meal kits to isolated older adults, or just making calls to check in on the most vulnerable members of our community, volunteers have been essential, and they make us feel that we are all in this together.



"We are partnering with the Department of Recreation and Parks to recognize the contributions of the many volunteers who make Howard County rock solid as a community," says Darlene Vaselaros, volunteer coordinator for the Department of Community Resources and Services (DCRS), "I hope many residents will join us to say thank you by participating in our 'Volunteers Rock! campaign.'"

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

— William Arthur Ward

Let your creativity soar and share a few words of gratitude by painting a rock to acknowledge special volunteers you know who have had a positive impact on our community. No artistic abilities required. For full details, and to let us know you'd like to participate, register at www.hocovolunteer.org starting April 1.

Completed "rocks of art" will be displayed in one of three dedicated rock gardens in the county between April 1 and August 1, 2021: Ellicott City 50+ Center; Gary J. Arthur Community Center; and the North Laurel Community Center.

A Message from
Howard County Executive

Calvin Ball



April brings warmer weather and rain showers – but it's also a month that has long been associated with taxes. This month, I would like to highlight our aging-in-place tax credit, tax preparation help, and remind our residents to get a vaccine when it is available to you.

The **Aging-In-Place Tax Credit** is available for all residents who are 65 years or older and have lived in the same dwelling for 40 years, or are a retired member, or spouse, of the military. The application is available online at services.howardcountymd.gov and is accepted on a rolling basis through June 30, 2021. This tax credit helps enable our older population to stay in their homes and continue thriving in Howard County.

If you need assistance preparing your taxes this year, the AARP and the IRS are offering **personal income tax preparation** for Howard County residents through April 15. Available to all middle- and low-income taxpayers, with emphasis on those age 60 and older, AARP's Tax Aide assistance is offered on a curbside, low-contact basis this year, from February 8 through April 15 at the Bain and East Columbia 50+ Centers. Appointments are limited but required. Call 443-741-1220 for details.

Finally, as spring approaches, there is hope that we will soon be able to put this pandemic behind us. An important step in that process is for all residents to **get vaccinated**. If you have any questions or hesitancy about getting a vaccine, or simply need to find a vaccine provider — visit covidvax.maryland.gov or call 855-634-6829. Residents can also register through our health department at 410-313-6284 and find answers to frequently asked questions at vaccine.howardcountymd.gov. As always, please continue to StayCOVIDSafe. We are all in this together!

Healthcare Decisions Day — April 16, 2021

On April 16 — NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY — all Americans are encouraged to ensure that their future healthcare choices are known and protected. The observance reminds us that it is important to make these decisions known, regardless of age or current health.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: a legal document that tells healthcare providers who it is that you wish to make medical decisions for you and what treatments you want or do not want, if you are not able to express what you want for yourself.

There are many ways to create an advanced directive; the process does not take long, and it is generally free. Online, visit <https://speakeasyhoward.org> or download "Maryland Advance Directive: Planning for Future Health Care Decisions" at <https://bit.ly/2MYwr4z>.

Completed directives can be uploaded to the SpeakEasy Howard website, or you can contact the Advanced Planning Coordinator at Howard County General Hospital at 443-518-6684 to have the document uploaded to your medical record.



Age-Friendly Initiative Springs Forward

This Spring, you will see more than just flowers popping up in Howard County, as the seeds of the Age-Friendly Howard County initiative take root. Launched in December 2019, the initiative's recommendations form the basis of a five-year action plan to make Howard County a more livable, age-friendly community, a great place to grow up and grow older in.

Throughout 2020, community members, county staff and representatives from nonprofit organizations and the faith community have worked together in eight groups to develop specific tasks that the community can undertake over the next several years. The Age-Friendly Steering Committee will wrap up its review of the recommendations this month, then a draft of an action plan will be presented to County Executive Ball in May. Once approved, a final copy of the Age-Friendly Howard County Action Plan will be submitted to AARP and the World Health Organization for review.

Acceptance into the Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities affords Howard County the opportunity to learn from other cities,

counties and states about changes that can be made to improve many facets of our community and make it a better place for all ages and stages of life.



Age-Friendly Howard County

The goal is for all residents to have opportunities to participate in age-friendly activities in a safe and secure environment, regardless of their age. An Age-Friendly Howard County respects all stages of life and offers affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, supportive community features and services, and programs which connect people to the community.

Watch for more information about the kick-off this summer and ways you can help reshape our community. Follow us on Facebook at #HoCoCommunity and visit us online at www.howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly for details. Once approved, the Action Plan will be posted on our website; hard copies will also be available.

Celebrating Older Americans Month "Communities of Strength"

THE 2021

MOSAIC PROJECT

A Virtual Workshop Series: SEASONS

Learn basic techniques of mosaic-making and complete a personal piece, plus an individual element to be combined into a large-scale installation at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center/Glenwood 50+ Center. Participants must be Howard County 50+ Center members to register.

SPACE IS LIMITED • \$20 SUPPLY FEE • REGISTER TODAY!

Virtual Information Session: Friday, April 16 at 10 AM

Contactless Supply Pick-Up: May 6 & 7; 10 to 11 AM at the
EAST COLUMBIA 50+ CENTER
6600 Cradlerock Way, Columbia 21045

VIRTUAL ART SESSIONS: Fridays, May 14, 21 & June 4, 11
10 to 11:30 AM

MORE INFORMATION:

Rachel McCracken at rmccracken@howardcountymd.gov

REGISTRATION: 410-313-0380 (VOICE/RELAY)

This program is a collaboration of the Howard County Office on Aging and Independence, the American Visionary Arts Museum, Howard County Arts Council and Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks

2021

MARYLAND LAW DAY

Friday, April 30 • 10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

HOWARD COUNTY LAW DAY:

TAKE ACTION AND ENACT YOUR DECISIONS

Medical Decision Document Preparation ensures that your preferences for medical treatment are honored should you become incapacitated or unable to express your wishes. Volunteer attorneys will offer FREE preparation of Maryland medical decision documents.

Virtual Presentation 10:00 a.m.

Individual Virtual Appointments follow until 1:00 p.m.

Call to schedule your appointment today!

410-313-0380 (VOICE/RELAY)

Contactless • Secure • Privacy Ensured

If you need this information in an alternate format or need accommodations to participate, call Maryland Access Point (MAP) at 410-313-1234 (voice/relay) one week in advance.

www.howardcountymd.gov/aging



NUTRITION ADVICE with CARMEN

Are YOU ready to get started on a **PATH** to **BETTER HEALTH** through **NUTRITION**?

OAI's Registered Dietitian, **CARMEN ROBERTS**, is available for **FREE, VIRTUAL NUTRITION CONSULTATIONS** via phone or videoconference.

A personal, 30-minute session can address your health or nutrition concerns related to weight management, diabetes, heart disease, food allergies and/or healthy eating habits.

Register at <https://bit.ly/30qKZgj>

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Cheryl Campbell
410-313-0387 (VOICE/RELAY)
chcampbell@howardcountymd.gov